A REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE ENGLISH NATION.

Saturday, February 2. 1706.

I Have been told, since I began this Subject, that I am pursuing popular Arguments with an ill Design, and that this Discourse of Mourning, is calculated to move the Rabble, and raise the Mob against the Court, as if the Practice of her Majesty's Houshold was ruinous to Trade, and help'd forward the Misery of her Subjects.

I am in this Paper subjected to more foolish Objections than any Man I believe ever met with on any Publick Occasion; and yet so much Malice is mingled with the Folly of the Objectors, that there seems some Necessity to answer.

Generally all our Mistakes in Argument, at least such as are not wilful, arise from a want of distinguishing Right of the Subject we are upon; and therefore to make a just State of this Case, I must turn it another way.

It is true that her Majesty's Command for regulating the Customs of Mourning in the Royal Houshold, would be an effectual Checque to this Misfortune, and I have been Discoursing of it as the best, readiest and most direct Step to relieve the immediate Distress which Trade suffers, and which the Poor feel in the Common Calamity of the Publick; but pray, Gentlemen, take this along with you too, that I no where say 'tis the only way to cure it; I grant her Majesty can do it with the Breath of her Mouth, but I must tell you, you may do it your selves if you please; and therefore there's no Ground for Mobbing the Government, and the Calumny is meerly malicious, and indeed so trifling, that it hardly requires any farther Reply: However, since I write to a carping, captious Generation, and Evil is every day suggested out of the best design'd Steps any Man can take, I shall go on a little in

in one Paper, more to tell the World how they may do all this Work of themſelves, without ſo much as putting her Majeſty to the Trouble of taking any notice of it.

I confeſs my ſelf very much of their Opinion who ſay, that all our Civil Miſchiefs lie at our own Door, I do not deny particular Exceptions to this, as to moſt General Rules; but in the Caſe before me it is very demonſtrably true.

Here we cry out of the Publick Grievance upon the occaſion of Mourning, and not without Cauſe, as has been plainly made out; but where lies the Fact? I have indeed talk'd of your Addreſſing and repreſenting the Grievance to her Majeſty, and 'tis the right way; but without this I am now upon, your Addreſs imports no more than to deſire her Majeſty that her Royal Command, may be iſſued out to prevent her Subjects being Fools.

Was ever a more prepoſterous Folly ſeen in the World? We are all convinc'd that a Publick Mourning is ruinous and deſtructive to Trade; and whence comes it to paſs? The Queen lays no Injunction upon the People to wear Black, the Civilities and Ceremonies of Courts, oblige the Queen and the Houſhold to go into Mourning; but what's this to the General Head of Trade? 'Tis imitating this in the general Habit in the Nation is the Evil; and whoſe Fault, whoſe Act and Deed is that? Is it not your own? Do you not deſtroy your ſelves, and ſtab the very Vitals of your Trade, in following the Example of thoſe you have no manner of reaſon to imitate, and that do not deſire you to imitate them?

'Tis true, Cuſtom makes it indecent to go to Court in Colours, when the Court is in Black; but Cuſtom again can alter that Indecency: And why ſhould not Trade, and the General Intereſt alter that Cuſtom?

But ſuppoſe, which is the worſt can be ſaid, That all that go to Court muſt go in Black; What a Trifle is all that to the General Trade of this Nation? What Part can any Man imagine it would bear in the General Quantity of Manufactures worn in this Kingdom? Nor above one to a hundred The Miſchief therefore is among our ſelves, that we will fall into a Faſhion, tho' it be entirely Deſtructive to our Country, Pernicious to Trade, and Ruinous to the Poor.

I formerly took leave to be a little merry with this matter, tho' the Subject is really Melancholy, that at the ſame time that we find a General Complaint of the Loſs of our Trade, by reaſon of the Mournings, we find the very Tradeſmen that complain, and their Families all in black; why really Gentlemen, if you will do ſo, right or wrong, never complain of the Decay of your Trade, never ſend your Petitions to the Parliament, or your Addreſs to the Queen; for why ſhould you trouble her Majeſty for that which you can bring to paſs without it?

If you will have the Affair check'd, deſire the Weavers in *Spittle Fields*, &c. to draw up a Petition to the Mercers on *Ludgate-Hill*, and the *Lady-makers* in *Pater-Noſter-Row*, &c. to wear no Black, not to go in Mourning themſelves, and follow a deſtructive Mode that ruines Trade; from thence let them go to the *Turky*-Merchants, Throſſers and Silk-men, and petition them, to let their Wives and Daughters go out of Mourning, that they may not put their own hands to the Ruine of the Silk Manufacture.

Let them then remind the Nobility and Gentry, That if Manufactures die, and Trade decays, Wool will be a Drug; the Tenants cannot pay Rent, and their Eſtates muſt ſink of Courſe: One General Reflection upon the fatal Conſequences of theſe things, would make the whole Nation Abjure Black, and reſolve to go no more into Mourning, hardly upon private Occaſions.

Were there a Plague in the Nation, and ſhould ſome skilful Phyſician give it as his Opinion, That there was ſome poiſonous Contagious Effluvium in the Drug, with which the Black was died, which, being worn on the Body, endanger'd the Health, and ſubjected us to an Infection, how univerſally would all People throw by their Black Cloaths, and ſhun the Company of any that did not, as a Perſon infected and dangerous.

Why really, Gentlemen, there is a mor-

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tal Contagion in this Unhappy Colour, that is Fatal to our Trade; the Prosperity of which, is the Health of the Nation; and will you not shun the Infection? 'Tis in your Power to stop the spreading of this Disease, and Check the Influence of it upon the whole Nation, and the Difficulty is nothing but throwing off your Black Cloaths.

What need you be concer'nd for what the Court Wears, or all those that are, or would be thought to belong to it? the Habits of the Royal Houshold Vary every Month, or as often as the Superiour Direction appoints, but the Custom of going all like the Court, has nothing in it but meer Contagion, and a fatal Malignancy as to Trade; and if you Harbour the Infection, your Trade will and must Dye of the Plague.

I could be very Pleasant here upon the Vanity of our People, in being willing to be thought to have some Business at Court, or to know how all was Transacted there; but as this is Remote to the present Case, and too Diverting, I omit it.

You see the Grievance is of your own Creating, the Plague is begun in your own Families; Cure it there first, I dare say, the Magnitude of Trade, and its dependencies are such, and so considerable, that the People are able, by Universal Regulations, to Govern Trade; and if all that are concern'd *in Trade*, or concern'd *for it*, would set their Hands to Reform the Practice, the Work would be done, and there would be no need to give Her Majesty the Trouble of an Address.

Nor is it needful to Prescribe Methods how this may done; I confess we are in *England* a Nation of no manner of Concert; no General Understanding or Conjunction of Interest, and so no Universal immediate Consent, can be expected in any thing for Publick Good; but methinks something might be contriv'd, to make a Woman Laugh'd at, that was seen in Black Cloaths, Close Mourning excepted; and that is not pleasant enough to be fear'd.

I cannot think of Proposing, to have the Mob throw Dirt or Stones at the Ladies; *I am for no Mob Methods in any Case whatever*; but is there no way to render Black peculiarly Odious and Unpleasaht to the People? is it not enough to make it hateful *viz.* That it will Ruine all our Trade? methinks a Nation so involv'd in Trade as this is, should want no Excitings to so great a Work, and which by but a Breath of Custom, would turn the whole Scale of Trade in such a Prodigious Manner; you Cry out of the Fashion; Pray, Gentlemen, what Fashion do you go in your selves, and how does it become a Fashion? Let us examine this Matter, and if the Tradesmen are found Authors, or Promoters of the Grievance, let us consider who they ought to Blame.

There are in this City and its Adjacencies, without troubling Political Arithmetick, 50000 Families that depend upon Trade; tho' every one of these Families, are not immediately dependent upon that part of Trade, which is directly concern'd in the Wearing Part; yet all Branches of Trade have such a Connexion of Interest, that no considerable part can suffer, without Influencing others; and I think there needs no Explication of that Assertion, or to tell the World, that if a Thousand Mercers, Lacemen, Milliners, *&c.* decay, all the Families, who Labour under them Decay, and all the Trades that these dealt with, feel the want of that Trade, their usual Expence occasion'd.

If in this City, and its Adjacent parts, 50000 Families depend on Trade; I affirm, that those 50000 Families, resolving for the Publick Advantage of Trade, to Wear no Black Cloths, nor to Trade with any that do, are are able by such a Concert, to Govern the Fashion it self, and Suppress the Mischief.

I might proceed to other Agreements in Trade, and a Universal Crying down the Wearing of Black among the People. That the Dyers should agree to die no Black Cloth, Stuff, Wool, or Silk; the Weavers to Weave none for such a time, or for so many Years; that those who being closely concern'd in the Damage of this Custom, leave it off themselves, should lay out none of their Money with any

Shop

Shop-Keeper, that wore Black Cloaths; that the City Ladies should appear all in Colours, and my Lady Mayoress, and all the Magistrates Ladies, receive no Visits in *Black*.

Let any Man but Compute, what Influence this would have made upon Trade, and how it would reduce the Grievances Complain'd of, to so Narrow a Compass, as to make it Cease to be a Grievance; I have to been Told, that 100 Shop-Keepers of several Employments, agreeing to Trade only with one another, will make every one a Trade; that there are few Tradesmen in *London*, but who having 99 Customers that Deal only with him, for what each Family wants, will Live very Comfortably on their Trade, and Thrive well enough; and some Clubs of Tradesmen have made the Experiment; if so, a Universal Agreement in Trade, may Command Trade; and Black can never be a General Wear, or Mode in *England*, if the Body of those very People that are Ruin'd by it, will set themselves to Decry it by their Practice.

Well, Gentlemen, then never Complain of being Ruin'd by the Mournings; if you will run into them your selves, 'tis another Case; What can the Queen do? Her Majesty can never save the People that will Ruine themselves; and to Address the Queen against the Mourning, and at the same time 100000 of your Wifes and Daughters Dress'd in Black; 'tis such a Contradiction, no Body can find in their Hearts to pity you.

I know there is a Stated Objection against this; that if you don't, Then you shall be out of the Fashion, and not look like Gentlefolks, *&c.*

Now there is a Pretty Question follows this very Ridiculous Scruple, and that is; Whether 'tis worth while to make your selves Beggars, that you may look like Gentlefolks? and when this Query is substantially Answer'd, I shall farther consider of the Matter.

In the mean time, it is certainly True of you, as in the Fable of Jupiter *and the Waggoner*; the Poor Fellow had drove his Waggon into the Ditch, and falls a Praying to *Jupiter*, to lugg it out again for him; *Jupiter* bid him not stand Whining and Canting to him, but set his Shoulder to the Wheel——If you will Petition Her Majesty, and not put your Hands to Regulate the Mischief; you only apply to the Queen, that your Wives and Daughters may look like Gentlefolks; may Dress like the Court and not be undone; if you will have the Grievance Redress'd, *Redress it your selves*, and then you may Address Her Majesty to Concurr with you, that the Gentry may join with you in it, and so make it Universal——But if you will wear Black your selves, you can hardly have the Face, to go ask the Queen to hinder you.

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